

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8352

S E C R E T ATHENS 2916

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: MMOL GR MASS

SUBJ: SALE OF REDEYE/HAMLET MISSILES TO GREECE

REF STATE 084150

FOR UNDER SECRETARY SISCO FROM KUBISCH

1. IN ACCORDANCE REFTTEL, LAST NIGHT I HAD A PRIVATE TALK WITH DEFENSE MINISTER AVEROFF CONCERNING THE SITUATION IN THE AEGEAN AND THE SALE OF REDEYE/HAMLET MISSILES TO GREECE. I TOLD AVEROFF HOW MUCH WE APPRECIATED HIS KEEPING US CLOSELY INFORMED OF DEVELOPMENTS IN THE AEGEAN AND URGED HIM ONCE AGAIN, AS I HAVE ON MANY PREVIOUS OCCASIONS, TO EXERCISE THE UTMOST RESTRAINT IN THE AEGEAN AND DO EVERYTHING HUMANLY POSSIBLE TO AVOID ANY INCIDENTS THERE WHICH COULD TRIGGER SOME KIND OF HOSTILITIES WITH TURKEY. AVEROFF SAID THAT THE LAST THINK HE AND GREECE WANTED WAS ANY FURTHER TENSION WITH TURKEY OR ANY CONFLICT WITH THE TURKS. HOWEVER, HE ASKED, WHAT SHOULD THE GREEKS DO IF THE TURKS FLY IN GREEK AIR SPACE OVER ONE OF THE GREEK ISLANDS? I SAID THE GOG COULD WARN THE TURKS, PROTEST TO THE TURKS, COMPLAIN, REMONSTRATE, MAKE REPRESENTATIONS -- IN FACT, TAKE A NUMBER OF STEPS SHORT OF ACTUALLY TRYING TO SHOOT THE TURKISH AIRCRAFT DOWN. I SAID THAT SHOOTING AN AIRCRAFT DOWN, WHETHER BY GROUND ANTI-AIRCRAFT FIRE, MISSILES OR INTERCEPTOR AIRCRAFT, WOULD, IT SEEMED TO ME, BE ABSOLUTELY A LAST RESORT WHEN IT APPEARED THAT THERE WAS NO OTHER CONCEIVABLE OPTION OPEN TO GREECE AND WAR WAS

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INEVITABLE. EVEN SO, I SAID, IF THE GREEKS FIRED ON A

TURKISH AIRCRAFT ALLEGEDLY IN GREEK AIR SPACE, AND THE AIRCRAFT SUBSEQUENTLY MANAGED TO GLIDE FROM GREEK AIR SPACE AND LAND OR CRASH ON TURKISH TERRITORY, THE GREEKS WOULD BE IN A VERY POOR POSITION TO PROVE THAT THE AIRCRAFT HAD IN FACT VIOLATED THEIR AIR SPACE. AVEROFF SAID HE APPRECIATED THIS AND THAT NO SERIOUS ATTEMPT HAD BEEN MADE TO SHOOT DOWN ANY TURKISH AIRCRAFT.

2. IN THIS CONNECTION, I REMINDED HIM OF THE ASSURANCES HE HAD EARLIER GIVEN US REGARDING THE HANDLING OF THE REDEYE/HAMLET MISSILES. I SAID THERE WAS CONCERN IN WASHINGTON THAT SOME OF THESE MISSILES MIGHT BE SENT TO THE ISLANDS WITH THE POSSIBILITY AN INCIDENT COULD TAKE PLACE THERE INVOLVING THE USE OF THIS EQUIPMENT.

3. AVEROFF ONCE AGAIN SAID NOT TO WORRY, THAT HE COULD GIVE ME IRONCLAD ASSURANCES THAT THESE MISSILES WOULD BE "KEPT UNDER LOCK AND KEY" BY AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL AND NOT AVAILABLE TO ORDINARY MILITARY PERSONNEL WHO MIGHT MISUNDERSTAND OR MISUSE THEM.

4. AVEROFF WENT ON TO SAY THAT IF WE WERE REALLY TROUBLED ABOUT MAKING THE REDEYE MISSILES AVAILABLE TO GREECE, HE PERSONALLY WOULD BE WILLING TO CONSIDER THE AVAILABILITY OF SOME OTHER ANTI-AIRCRAFT WEAPONS SYSTEM THAT MIGHT MEET GREECE'S NEEDS JUST AS WELL OR BETTER, WITHOUT THE SPECIAL HAZARD THAT THE REDEYE/HAMLET APPARENTLY HAS. AVEROFF SAID THAT HIS MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT MIGHT NOT AGREE WITH HIS POSITION BUT THAT HE WISHED TO BE COOPERATIVE AND WOULD BE PREPARED TO CONSIDER OTHER POSSIBILITIES. HOWEVER, HE WENT ON, HE KNEW THAT HIS ARMED FORCES WERE AWAITING THE IMMINENT ARRIVAL OF 100 OF THESE MISSILES, THE FIRST PORTION OF AN ORDER FOR 1,000. HE SUGGESTED THAT IN LIGHT OF THE ASSURANCES HE HAD GIVEN ME THAT WE GO AHEAD AND SHIP THE 100 REDEYE/HAMLETS IMMEDIATELY SO AS TO AVOID AN ANGRY REACTION IN THE GREEK MILITARY IF THE SHIPMENT WERE HELD UP FURTHER, AND THEN HE WOULD SEE THAT THEY WERE SAFEGUARDED WHILE WE CONSIDERED ALTERNATE WEAPONS SYSTEMS. THEN, IF WE COULD AGREE ON SOMETHING ELSE SUBSEQUENTLY, AVEROFF SAID THE 100 REDEYE/HAMLETS COULD BE RETURNED TO US.

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5. I TOLD AVEROFF I WOULD REPORT HIS SUGGESTION AND OFFER TO COOPERATE TO WASHINGTON AND IN THE MEANTIME EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR HIS RENEWED ASSURANCES, ESPECIALLY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE AEGEAN PROBLEM. KUBISCH

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